

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

Claims 3 and 5-11 are pending in the application. Claims 8 and 9 are independent. Without waiving any argument, and to advance prosecution, claims 3 and 5-8 are amended, claims 1 and 4 are canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein, and claims 10-11 are newly added. More specifically, claims 3 and 7 are amended to depend from allowed claim 9, newly added claim 10 generally tracks originally filed claim 2, claim 8 is amended to include the subject matter of canceled (and objected to) claim 4, and subject matter removed by this amendment from previously presented claim 8 is rewritten as new claim 11. Thus, the Applicant believes that no new matter is added.

Claims 1, 3, 7, and 8 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Aramaki (USP 5,400,591) ("Aramaki") in view of Litorell et al. (USP 6,609,364) ("Litorell").

Claims 4-6 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims.

Claim 9 is allowed.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicates that claims 4-6 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims.

Also, the Office Action indicates that claim 9 is allowed.

III. Claim Rejections-35 USC § 103

Independent claim 8, which after the above-amendments, is the only pending independent claim rejected, stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Aramaki in view of Litorell.

In view of the above-identified amendments, which incorporate the subject matter of objected to claim 4 into claim 8, the Applicant respectfully submits that claim 8, as well as its

dependent claims, is allowable.

In addition, the Office Action indicates that claim 9 (the only other independent claim pending) is allowed, so it is respectfully submitted that its dependent claims are also allowable.

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims (i.e. claims 3 and 5-11) are in condition for allowance.

IV. Conclusion

The Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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